

## WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

**COMMITTEE: TOURISM**

**DATE: DECEMBER 4, 2014**

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**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

SUPERVISORS MERLINO  
KENNY  
DICKINSON  
CONOVER  
VANSELOW

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

SUPERVISORS WOOD  
FRASIER

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

REPRESENTING THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT:

KATE JOHNSON, DIRECTOR  
PETER GIRARD, CREATIVE DIRECTOR  
TANYA BRAND, GROUP TOUR PROMOTER

PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR  
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD

FRANK E. THOMAS, BUDGET OFFICER

SUPERVISOR BROCK

JOHN DANIELS, L & P MEDIA

MICHAEL CONSUELO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LAKE GEORGE REGIONAL  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

CHRISTINA CURLEY, SPECIAL EVENTS COORDINATOR, LAKE GEORGE  
REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

FRANK DITTRICH, INN AT ERLOWEST/SUN CASTLE RESORT

DAVID KENNY, ADIRONDACK FACTORY OUTLET CENTER/MARINE  
VILLAGE/SUN CASTLE RESORT

ANN MARIE CASTELLANO, THE WINDGATE

KATHY FLACKE MUNCIL, FORT WILLIAM HENRY

FRED AUSTIN, FORT WILLIAM HENRY

GARY THORNQUIST, LAKE GEORGE RV PARK

RICHARD CARLSON, THE GEORGIAN RESORT

DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*

TONY HALL, *LAKE GEORGE MIRROR JOURNAL*

CHARLENE DiRESTA, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

*FOR ALL OTHERS PRESENT, PLEASE SEE ATTACHED SIGN-IN SHEET*

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Mr. Merlino called the meeting of the Tourism Committee to order at 10:01 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Vanselow, seconded by Mr. Conover and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Kate Johnson, Tourism Director, who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.* Ms. Johnson noted she; Peter Girard, Creative Director; and Tanya Brand, Group Tour Promoter, would provide updates for the Committee members. She added there would also be a presentation from John Daniels, of L & P Media, and a report from Christina Curley, Special Events Coordinator for the Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce & Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB).

Commencing the agenda review, Ms. Johnson requested a contract with Light & Power Communications, Ltd. d/b/a/ L & P Media in an amount not to exceed \$35,000 to provide professional Drupal web redesign/website hosting/production services and to oversee various aspects of the Warren County Tourism website and its domain for a term commencing January 1, 2015 and terminating December 31, 2015 with the option to renew for three additional one year terms. She noted an RFP (Request for Proposals) had been released and the four lowest responsible bidders were included in the bid tabulation sheet which was displayed for the Committee members; *a copy of the bid tabulation sheet is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Girard explained ten bids had been received and with this type of contract it was necessary to factor in other aspects in addition to the bid prices. He stated additional fees, such as the website hosting fee needed to be considered. He pointed out the website hosting fee for L & P Media for a three year contract would be \$1,440 compared to Origin Eight which had a website hosting fee of \$17,640 for a three year contract. Mr. Girard explained in detail how the lowest responsible bidder had been determined. He noted some of the fees which would be charged by other companies would not be assessed by L & P Media because they were the current vendor and had already established a database and an existing feed. Ms. Johnson commented the Tourism Department had a great working relationship with L & P Media. Mr. Girard said the company was based in Albany and provided the best value for this contract.

Mr. Conover questioned the scope of work for the website creation/set-up fee since the Tourism Department currently had an established website. Mr. Girard explained L & P Media was in the process of re-building the Tourism Department website to make it adaptive. He said the fee covered the re-building of the website in the event that new technologies were developed and since the County currently did not require a new website, the website creation/set-up fee would not be charged. He stated the contract had expired at a point when a whole new website was not necessary but it was necessary to include all possibilities in the RFP. A brief discussion ensued pertaining to the details of the RFP.

Frank Dittrich, of the Inn at Erlowest and Sun Castle Resort, asked what kind of analytic data was received to understand how powerful the website presence was and he questioned if this was part of the RFP. Mr. Girard responded Tourism Department staff attended workshops for Google Analytics and he noted a lot of the website restructuring was determined based on results from Google Analytics. He expressed that Fireworks and Lodging were determined to be the most important to website users and would therefore be placed prominently on the website. He noted Google Analytics were used to formulate the specifications of the RFP. Mr. Dittrich asked if as part of the website hosting services, the providers offered these services or was it incumbent upon Tourism Department staff members to complete the research. He stated there were many website development companies and he felt there were some that would be more powerful than others in leading the Tourism Department website towards the "hot spots". He said the Tourism Department should be getting this information from the provider rather than having to do the labor themselves. Mr. Girard responded L & P Media provided the Tourism Department with the tools to access the data and reviewed the information with them to offer suggestions. He said Tourism Department staff logged into the Google Analytics account, learned about the data and how to best take advantage of it. He commented it was important the staff know and understand what the website users wanted to see. He stated the vendors all provided a portfolio of their capabilities and he noted L & P Media had done an excellent job with the Tourism Department thus far. He said L & P Media were among the lowest four responsible bidders and when others factors were considered they were the lowest. Ms. Johnson reiterated there would be a presentation from Mr. Daniels of L & P Media during the Committee Meeting. Mr. Dickinson stated the Tourism Department had done a great job with the RFP and with explaining the reasoning for selecting L & P Media.

Motion was made by Mr. Conover, seconded by Mr. Dickinson and carried unanimously to authorize the contract with Light & Power Communications, Ltd. d/b/a/ L & P Media as outlined above. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the December 19, 2014 Board Meeting.*

Ms. Johnson requested a contract with the Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce & CVB in an amount not to exceed \$140,000 to increase year-round convention/conference/special event business in Warren County for a term commencing January 1, 2015 and terminating December 31,

2015. She noted the full proposals had been distributed to the Committee members at the previous Meeting for review. She commented the Committee members were requested to contact her with questions and recommendations and the majority of them had. She mentioned Mr. Merlino had further discussion with the Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce & CVB. Mr. Merlino recalled two proposals had been received and the Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce & CVB had been the lowest at \$165,000. He advised he had met with Michael Consuelo, Executive Director of the Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce & CVB, several times to discuss the proposal which had been lowered to \$140,000. He said he had a Mission Statement from the Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce & CVB if any of the Committee members wished to review it and Ms. Johnson pointed out a copy had been included in the agenda packet. Mr. Merlino mentioned they had worked with Robert Blais, Mayor of the Village of Lake George, who desired a website for the Festival Space at Charles R. Wood Park. He noted the Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce & CVB had included the development of the website in their proposal. He opined this was a big venture and he felt the Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce & CVB would be equal to the task. Ms. Johnson noted the last four pages of Attachment 2 represented the re-submission of the original proposal from the Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce & CVB.

Motion was made by Mr. Dickinson, seconded by Mr. Vanselow and carried unanimously to authorize the contract with the Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce & CVB as outlined above. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the December 19, 2014 Board Meeting.*

Ms. Johnson requested the continuation of the lease agreement with the Adirondack Factory Outlet Center, Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$15,000 for space used as a Satellite Tourism Office/Visitor's Information Center.

Motion was made by Mr. Conover and seconded by Mr. Vanselow to authorize the continuation of the lease agreement with the Adirondack Factory Outlet Center, Inc. as outlined above.

Mr. Conover commented the Satellite Tourism Office received thousands of visitors and he asked if the exact number was available. Ms. Johnson responded she did not have the information with her but it had been discussed at the last Committee Meeting. She noted the Satellite Tourism Office/Visitor's Information Center was not staffed all of the time but when they were there was great dialog with visitors and local residents. Mr. Dickinson opined the County was not getting their money's worth with the Satellite Tourism Office/Visitor's Information Center. He said most of the people who visited the site were already in the building to shop at the outlet stores. Ms. Johnson advised the Satellite Tourism Office had also been introduced as a meeting place for bus tours. She said she felt there was value to the location and she agreed some visitors were already in the building shopping but they were given the opportunity to find out about events happening throughout the County or to obtain information for family members that might be visiting. Mr. Kenny advised the Satellite Tourism Office offered value due to the personal contact with visitors and he noted the Tourism Department in the Municipal Center was largely unavailable to tourists. He added visitors did not come in off the street to visit the Tourism Department in the Municipal Center but they did to visit the Satellite Tourism Office/Visitor's Information Center. Mr. Merlino commented a significant number of brochures were distributed at the Satellite Tourism Office annually. Ms. Johnson pointed out there was a guest book which showed where the visitors had come from and there were many from out of the area. Mr. Conover stated the Satellite Tourism Office helped to orient people as to what was available in the County and he suggested this type of data be measured during this lease in order to alleviate concerns in the future. Ms. Johnson stated the Tourism Department staff was the most knowledgeable about County wide activities, events and lodging properties and she said their expertise was invaluable at the location. Mr. Conover suggested

a short evaluation form or questionnaire for visitors and Ms. Johnson replied she would look into the possibility.

David Kenny, of the Adirondack Factory Outlet Center/Marine Village/Sun Castle Resort, mentioned that last weekend the Village of Lake George had held a lighting ceremony at Shepards Park and it was not well attended because no one had been aware it was being held. He said he had thought the location would be more of an information center but it did not seem to be. He expressed the same photographs had been up for over a year and there was nothing about the Satellite Tourism Office/Visitor's Information Center which was interactive. He stated weekly events should be highlighted and updated. He expressed there was nothing about Gore Mountain Ski Resort at the location and Ms. Johnson countered that Gore Mountain Ski Resort was highlighted in the video. Mr. D. Kenny stated this was a video running on a loop and he added there was sufficient wall space to mount several televisions to play many videos. He opined the space could be better utilized for promotion of upcoming events. He mentioned the possibility of charging a fee to local businesses for brochure and information distribution for properties, such as Six Flags Great Escape. Ms. Johnson pointed out the Satellite Tourism Office/Visitor's Information Center had a bulletin board on an easel which highlighted upcoming events. Mr. D. Kenny advised the Satellite Tourism Office could be improved to ensure visitors received information without having to search for it. Mr. Merlino stated he understood what Mr. D. Kenny was eluding to and they would look into the possibility.

Mr. Merlino called the question and the motion was carried by majority vote, with Mr. Dickinson voting in opposition, to authorize the continuation of the lease agreement with the Adirondack Factory Outlet Center, Inc. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the December 19, 2014 Board Meeting.*

Ms. Johnson requested the continuation of the Intermunicipal Agreement with the Village of Lake George in an amount not to exceed \$25,000 to provide funding for the Lake George Visitor's Center.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Conover and carried unanimously to authorize the continuation of the Intermunicipal Agreement with the Village of Lake George as outlined above. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the December 19, 2014 Board Meeting.*

Ms. Johnson requested authorization for attendance at 2015 in-State, out-of-State and Canadian consumer shows and conferences by Tourism Department personnel and County Supervisors.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Conover and carried unanimously to authorize attendance at 2015 in-State, out-of-State and Canadian consumer shows and conferences as outlined above. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the December 19, 2014 Board Meeting.*

Ms. Johnson requested authorization for attendance at 2015 in-State, out-of-State and Canadian Motorcoach trade shows/sales blitz/marketplaces by Tourism Department personnel and County Supervisors. She noted Supervisors were encouraged to attend any of the trade shows, etc. with the Departmental staff.

Motion was made by Mr. Conover and seconded by Mr. Kenny to authorize attendance at 2015 in-State, out-of-State and Canadian Motorcoach trade shows/sales blitz/marketplaces as outlined above.

Mr. Conover said there had been questions and interest expressed in the Canadian market and he commented it would be beneficial if all of the information pertaining to Canadian marketing was contained in one document. He added any Canadian marketing performed by the Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce & CVB should also be included in the document. Mr. Consuelo pointed out Canadian marketing offered an opportunity for the Tourism Department and the Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce & CVB to work together on advertising. Ann Marie Castellano, of The Windgate, stated that from a hoteliers point of view, the Canadian market had increased. Gary Thornquist, of the Lake George RV Park, agreed and noted about 18% of his business was Canadian and 36% was New York State residents. He commented Canadian business was essential to tourism in Warren County and he mentioned Canadian visitors tended to stay in the area longer because they had more time off work. Mr. Conover suggested the information be reported by time of year and should include package deals. He added he had been informed that it made sense for Canadian visitors to stay overnight and he questioned how lodging, retail and activities could be packaged together to maximize the Canadian visitor experience. A brief discussion ensued.

Mr. Merlino called the question and the motion was carried unanimously to authorize attendance at 2015 in-State, out-of-State and Canadian Motorcoach trade shows/sales blitz/marketplaces as outlined above. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the December 19, 2014 Board Meeting.*

Ms. Johnson requested to extend the existing contract with the Adirondack Regional Tourism Council, Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$128,000 for regional marketing services through the use of New York State Matching Funds. She noted this was an annual contract and New York State Matching Funds encouraged Counties to support their region in this manner.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Vanselow and carried unanimously to extend the existing contract with the Adirondack Regional Tourism Council, Inc. as outlined above. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the December 19, 2014 Board Meeting.*

Ms. Johnson requested an agreement with Henry Hudson Tours, Inc. d/b/a Travel Plaza Information Centers in an amount not to exceed \$5,495 for brochure distribution. She explained the brochures would be distributed at three northbound New York State Thruway Information Centers: Sloatsburg; Plattekill; and New Baltimore. She noted over 35,000 Travel Guides had been distributed at these locations last year. Pertaining to surveys which questioned where visitors heard about the Lake George Area, Mr. Conover asked where brochures fell on the list. Ms. Johnson replied picking up a brochure at an information center did not rate high on the list. She said a respondent to the survey might mention a brochure but not the information center where it had been obtained. She commented the locations were on the Thruway on the way to the Lake George Area and it was an asset to have brochures at these locations.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Conover and carried unanimously to authorize an agreement with Henry Hudson Tours, Inc. d/b/a Travel Plaza Information Centers as outlined above. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the December 19, 2014 Board Meeting.*

Ms. Johnson indicated information pertaining to the 2014 Summer Conversion Survey was included in the agenda packet. She mentioned the Tourism Department had been completing surveys twice annually for several years with consumers who requested information and provided email addresses. She explained the surveys ascertained the following: daily and overnight spending habits; where

they visited; and some personal data. This year, she continued, the survey had revealed that dining, family amusements, touring and shopping had ranked as the top activities. She mentioned most visitors reported staying in hotels, motels and resorts in Lake George, Diamond Point, Queensbury and Bolton Landing. She reported 62% of travel plans were made by women with an average age of 53, with a college education. She pointed out research for vacations was mostly completed over the internet although 63% of those surveyed indicated they had booked by directly calling the property and 37% had booked online. She advised the average party size was four people; the average length of stay was four days; and the average expenditure was \$99 per person per day. Ms. Johnson informed 57% of those surveyed rated their stay as excellent; 32% rated it as very good; and 98% would recommend visiting the area. She advised the majority of the responses were from New York State, followed by Connecticut; New Jersey; and Canada. She said the survey questioned what visitors would like to see changed in the area and parking rated very high on the list. She added there were several people who indicated they loved the area just the way it was.

Ms. Johnson stated the last Quarterly Newsletter of 2014 was distributed on November 20<sup>th</sup> and it was displayed for the Committee members. She advised the Newsletter was distributed to local tourism related businesses and government officials and the goal was to update the tourism community on recent and upcoming promotions and included visuals and statistics. She noted the Newsletter also supplied research and travel trends and news worthy feature stories. She commented the contract with the Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce & CVB also included a submission to the Newsletter by Christina Curley, Special Events Coordinator for the Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce & CVB. She mentioned the November Newsletter was sent to 1,088 email addresses with an open rate of 15% and she added 12.5% to 13% was considered an average open rate. She advised the most clicked story in the November Newsletter had been Governor Cuomo's announcement regarding the \$6.3 million in funding for the Lake George Beach Improvement Project to improve water quality and increase recreational access to the lake.

Ms. Johnson reported that eight properties were participating in the Winter Mid Week Lodging Program, as follows: Anna's Bed and Breakfast in Chestertown; Sleep Inn and Suites in Queensbury; The Sagamore Resort in Bolton Landing; the Best Western of Lake George; Ramada Inn Glens Falls located in Queensbury; The Alpine Lodge in North Creek; and Fern Lodge in Chestertown. She mentioned Cunningham's Ski Barn in North Creek had also partnered with several lodging properties as part of the program. She pointed out a feature button and landing page were included on the Tourism Department website for the Winter Mid Week Lodging Program. She added the Program had been featured on the November 12<sup>th</sup> email blast and all participants had direct links to their websites. She noted offers were valid December 1<sup>st</sup> through March 31<sup>st</sup> and participants were encouraged to offer package deals with winter recreation activities and properties.

Ms. Johnson recalled the New Jersey Transit Platform advertising program had been reviewed at the previous Committee Meeting and samples of New Jersey Transit Platform posters were displayed for the Committee members. She advised the posters contained QR (quick response) Codes which led visitors to the Winter Video. She commented the logos for the ski areas and the Snow Train were present on all posters.

Ms. Johnson informed the 2015 Email Blast Partner Time Line was scheduled and a copy of same was included in the agenda packet. She noted the distribution dates and contents for each email blast had been determined and a sample email blast was displayed for the Committee members. She noted several advertisers had secured their spots on 2015 email blasts. She indicated the need to increase the size of the email blasts in order to provide more content and capabilities. She informed Mr. Girard had been working with Michael Colvin, Director of the Information Technology (IT) Department, to research new software. Mr. Girard explained the current method of delivering email

blasts had been used for the last five years and it was time to update. He commented they were looking into new software to provide more capabilities which would allow them to work across multiple platforms, such as different smart phones, operating systems, etc. He stated Mr. Colvin was looking into purchasing software which would allow email blasts to be more adaptive to the type of device used to access them. He noted the new software would improve their ability to create and display content in the email blasts. Right now, he continued, they were limited on how long and wide the email blast was allowed to be and the new software would remedy these limitations.

Ms. Johnson stated the Public Relations Report for November, created by Joanne Conley, Assistant Tourism Coordinator, was included in the agenda packet and the most newsworthy media happenings included an upcoming Ultimate Guide to Summer 2015 article in *Westchester Family Magazine* and an Adirondack Craft Beverage Trail article in the *Boston Globe*. She said the Report showed the significance of the Facebook "likes" which had exceeded 6,000 and she noted the number of Twitter followers was increasing.

Ms. Johnson informed she had submitted Part 2 of the Matching Funds Grant application and an estimate had been received of \$78,076 which was about \$1,300 less than last year.

Ms. Brand said the November issue of the Group Loop Newsletter was distributed to 3,181 email addresses on November 6, 2014 and a copy of same was displayed for the Committee members. She indicated the Newsletter had highlighted the availability of the 2015 Group Travel Planner and contained some Tour Operator comments from the Destinations of New York State FAM (familiarization) Tour held in September.

Ms. Brand apprised her first show each year was typically the American Bus Association (ABA) Marketplace. She indicated that Warren County continued to sponsor the ABA Tour Operator Binder which was used during appointments held at the Marketplace and an image of the Binder was displayed for the Committee members. Once sponsorship for the Binder was secured, she continued, Warren County Tourism Department was granted a booth on the Marketplace floor for the week. She said a postcard was placed in each registration bag to direct Tour Operators to the booth and an image of the postcard was displayed for the Committee members. Once at the booth, she continued, Tour Operators were given the opportunity to enter to win an Adirondack chair which was shipped to the winner. She announced that at the 2015 ABA Marketplace, she would work in the Destinations of New York State booth which would allow her to distribute Warren County brochures from this booth, as well. She said she would work the Destinations of New York State booth whenever she was not manning the Warren County booth and an image of the Warren County information booth was displayed for the Committee members.

Ms. Brand informed that Viator was a TripAdvisor Company and was the leading seller of tours and activities online. She stated she had encouraged all of the Warren County partners to sign up with Viator because they had been offering free membership until the end of 2014. She explained Viator had recently partnered with "I ♥ NY" to assemble a range of New York State tours, attractions and activities to promote on their websites, [www.viator.com](http://www.viator.com) and [www.tripadvisor.com](http://www.tripadvisor.com). She stated Viator currently featured New York City and was looking to expand their Upstate New York offerings. She displayed Viator information for the Committee members; *a copy of which is on file with the minutes*. Ms. Johnson pointed out a lot of International travels used the websites and Ms. Brand said partnering with Viator and TripAdvisor was a big advantage towards attracting International travelers to the area.

Ms. Brand informed last September the Warren County Tourism Department had partnered with "I ♥ NY" on a Responsible Travel FAM Tour for a group of International Tour Operators and Travel

Writers interested in experiences within New York State. She advised a group of 10 to 12 Tour Operators and Travel Writers had toured the area. She noted Responsible Travel was described as "a richer, more authentic travel experience with benefits to community and conservation". She stated as a result of the FAM Tour, a feature article on New York State had been written by James Liston for the United Kingdom's largest newspaper, *The Independent*; a copy of the article is on file with the minutes.

Ms. Brand recalled she had previously informed the Committee members of the Haunted History Trail of New York State initiative; however, she continued, she had failed to point out that Travel Writer Lindsay Hawkins had a blog which was included on the website. She explained the website was a collaboration of 21 New York State Counties which featured haunted and non-haunted itineraries, attractions and events. She advised Ms. Hawkins had visited the area and had stayed at the Fort William Henry Resort; completed a Fort William Henry Spirits of History Tour; and had lunch on the Lake George Steamboat Company's Lac Du St. Sacrament.

Ms. Brand informed of a recent editorial in *Group Tour Magazine* which covered the Railroad Heritage in Warren County; Saratoga-North Creek Railway; the North Creek Depot Museum; and Railroads on Parade. She noted the article had also appeared on the *Group Tour Magazine's* Facebook page. She announced recent ad placements in the following publications: *Bus Tour Magazine*; *Group Tour Magazine*; *ABA's Destinations Magazine*; *Student Group Tour Magazine*; and the *Student Group Tour Magazine* website and copies of these recent ads were displayed for the Committee members. Ms. Brand advised of her recent return from the Ontario Motor Coach Association (OMCA) Show and she said she typically attended at least one Canadian show per year. She commented she alternated between the OMCA Show and the Quebec Bus Owners Association. She said a lot of great leads had been received from the OMCA Show for tours in 2015.

Mr. Girard informed there had been two email blasts since the previous Committee Meeting, the first of which had been the Winter Contest email blast released on November 12, 2014 to 137,482 subscribers and opened by 9,218 people during the three day tracking period. He said the email subscriber list had been cleaned up and purged prior to the Winter Recreation email blast released on December 3, 2014 to 124,598 subscribers and he noted this email blast was still being tracked. He mentioned the email subscriber list was purged twice per year to remove bad or duplicate email addresses. Mr. Conover asked how the subscriber list was formed and Mr. Girard responded these were people who checked the box to opt in to receive email notifications.

Mr. Girard played the 30-second Winter television commercial for the Committee members and he commented all of the television commercials directed viewers to the [www.lakegeorgeny.com](http://www.lakegeorgeny.com) website, as opposed to the [www.visitlakegeorge.com](http://www.visitlakegeorge.com) website which allowed the Department to track the impact of the commercials. He mentioned that print and online ads did not direct people to the [www.lakegeorgeny.com](http://www.lakegeorgeny.com) website which was only used for television commercials. Mr. Kenny questioned the effectiveness of the 15-second television commercials in comparison to the 30-second commercials and he opined the 30-second commercial seemed to be more informative. Mr. Girard explained the 15-second commercials were more accessible in different markets and the responses varied by the length of the commercials. Ms. Johnson pointed out cable television only aired the 30-second commercials but network television accepted both the 15-second and the 30-second commercials. She noted the 15-second commercial often played in the morning when she watched the *Today Show*. Mr. Girard commented the 15-second and 30-second commercials were the primary television advertisements while the Video on Demand (VOD) was the 60-second commercial. He displayed the [www.lakegeorgeny.com](http://www.lakegeorgeny.com) landing page for the Committee members and noted visitors were requested to enter their information to receive a Travel Guide and for a chance



to win the Giveaway Contest. He added that when the visitors submitted their information, they were redirected to the [www.visitlakegeorge.com](http://www.visitlakegeorge.com) website.

Mr. Girard displayed the current Landing Page Takeover of Time Warner Cable's webmail login page for the Committee members and he noted the Landing Page Takeover would run for an entire day and requested visitors to enter their information to receive a Travel Guide and for a chance to win the Giveaway Contest. Mr. Girard displayed the 2014-2015 Giveaway Contest and he commented a large amount of email subscribers were generated in this way. He informed the Warren County Tourism Department was currently restructuring their website to make it more adaptable to all mobile devices and he advised Mr. Daniels would explain the process.

Mr. Daniels stated L & P Media was very excited to have the opportunity to redesign and redevelop the [www.visitlakegeorge.com](http://www.visitlakegeorge.com) website in order to change the appearance and make it responsive for mobile devices. He apprised that in April of 2014 the amount of data transferred on mobile devices had surpassed that of personal computers. He said the redesigned website would leverage the beautiful imagery of Warren County and he displayed the newly redesigned website for the Committee members and reviewed it in detail. He reiterated the website was built to be responsive for viewing on smart phones, tablets, personal computers and smart televisions and the information would be stacked appropriately based on the device used. He advised the website would contain an edge to edge display; two level navigation; an increased amount of colors; a larger logo; and a persistent header. He explained the persistent header stayed in place as the user scrolled or changed landing pages. He mentioned the information currently contained on the left side navigation bar would be relocated to the top right side of the page. He noted the human eye immediately went to the top right side of a web page. Mr. Girard pointed out the persistent header would follow the viewer down the page as they scrolled through the content meaning the logo and the request to enter information would always be viewable. He noted a lot of information obtained through Google Analytics had been factored into the redesign of the website. Mr. Daniels explained the new design would have rotating graphics used to promote special events and would include an overlay to allow for an introduction or descriptive text to promote the event which would be semi-transparent so no aspects of the image would be blocked. Mr. Girard explained the current website had an image rotation where several images were displayed and the new website would contain one large image and three feature boxes which would highlight things to do in the area. Mr. Dittrich asked if the website being displayed was a prototype and Mr. Daniels replied affirmatively. Mr. Girard explained the larger image would rotate allowing the viewer to "thumb" through images.

Mr. Daniels pointed out the top navigation which was included in the persistent header contained "+" marks to inform the users that additional information was available. He explained the three feature buttons would contain a descriptive title, an image and a brief descriptive text with a "read more" button which could be clicked for further information. Mr. Daniels informed L & P Media had completed a study when redesigning the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles website which showed the top percentage of readers on the internet only read 25% to 27% of a web page. He mentioned the footer design of the new website would contain important information, such as upcoming special events, featured articles, the display of affiliate logos, etc. He noted second level navigation had been included to highlight the legal notices which were required. Mr. Girard pointed out all the content being displayed on the redesigned website was for the purposes of place holders and was not necessarily the top three events which would be placed on the feature buttons.

Mr. Girard explained the website included a content management system which would allow the Department to change content as needed and he noted the current website also included a content management system. Mr. Daniels stated Google Analytics statistics were received daily but in order to get an accurate measurement of the impact of content, it took a few days to a week of statistics.

In answer to the question of when the redesigned website was expected to go live, Mr. Girard replied the website would be launched in December. Mr. Daniels stated that developing for responsive had created a whole new aspect to website development but the bulk of the traffic was coming from mobile devices. He explained the information on the website would stack in different manners depending on the device used to access it. A brief discussion ensued pertaining to Google Analytics statistics.

Mr. Conover acknowledged the Warren County Tourism Department had developed an extensive image library and he inquired about the policy for the sharing of those images and where the images could be accessed from. Mr. Girard responded the policy differed depending on the image and he explained certain images could not be shared due to the photographer who took them. He commented any images taken by Tourism Department staff were accessible and he noted they were contacted on a regular basis with image requests. Ms. Johnson pointed out there was a media section of the website where users could request images and users were asked to credit [www.visitlakegeorge.com](http://www.visitlakegeorge.com) for the image when it was used. Mr. Girard acknowledged it would be necessary to put some sort of an image library system in place; however, he added, this would be a huge undertaking because there were so many images that they could not all be hosted on the Warren County servers. He said an entire system would need to be established but formal requests would still need to be made to obtain images. A brief discussion ensued pertaining to the image library.

Richard Carlson, of the Georgian Resort, commented the [www.visitlakegeorge.com](http://www.visitlakegeorge.com) website did not indicate the location of "The Lake George Area" and he pointed out Warren County was not included in the description. He suggested the addition of a small map of New York State indicating the location of Warren County. He asked if there had been any consideration to developing a mobile website in addition to the responsive website. Mr. Daniels responded he advised his clients to either develop a mobile site or redesign the current website to be responsive. He explained a properly developed responsive website eliminated the need for a mobile website and developing both would only add to the development costs unnecessarily. He noted the responsive website was generally the most cost effective and adopted method.

Ms. Curley thanked the Committee members for approving the contract with the Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce & CVB and said she was looking forward to continuing as the Special Event Coordinator. She commented one of the first things she wanted to accomplish was the website for the Festival Space at Charles R. Wood Park.

Ms. Curley reported her recent attendance at the 2014 Rejuvenate Marketplace held in Atlanta, Georgia on October 27-31, 2014 and the 2014 TEAMS Conference & Expo held in Las Vegas, Nevada on November 10-14, 2014. She explained the Rejuvenate Marketplace was a religious meeting planners conference for one-on-one appointments. She said this had been her second or third time attending the Rejuvenate Marketplace and this year she had felt the majority of attendees had been familiar with the Lake George Area and were knowledgeable of the area offerings. She advised she had returned from the Rejuvenate Marketplace with RFP's which she would send to lodging properties. She informed the TEAMS Conference & Expo was a sports related meeting planner conference and she had held one-on-one appointments there, as well. She advised there were not as many RFP's derived from the TEAMS Conference & Expo because she was still trying to get the point across that Warren County could accommodate sports, such as mountain biking, whitewater rafting, etc. She expressed future plans included marketing Warren County in the corporate and National markets.

Ms. Curley informed of a recent luncheon meeting she had with representatives from the New York State CVB's and the New York State Public High School Athletic Association who were revamping their RFP system to be more detailed. Since that meeting, she continued, she had received a few RFP's for championship events. She advised plans for the King George Fishing Derby to be held on July 10-13, 2015 were going well. She added she had attended a recent meeting where it was announced that the King George Fishing Derby website would soon be launched. She commented RFP's had been sent to several hotels and the registration form for the Derby would list the hotel rates. She said she was hoping the Derby would be successful so she could highlight it at future conferences and trade shows. Ms. Curley reported receiving several inquiries for weddings and family reunions. She noted a lot of the wedding inquiries were looking for locations for a destination wedding. She apprised she had been working with the Ragnar Adirondack Race for their September of 2015 event.

Mr. Conover pointed out the King George Fishing Derby had derived from an effort by Mayor Blais in conjunction with the SAVE (Stop Aquatic Invasives from Entering) Lake George group to reach out to the sporting community to inform them that we needed to protect our waters and support water sporting events. He opined the event was scheduled at an opportune time right after the 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend. He said this would be an annual event which was "home grown".

Mr. Consuelo also thanked the Committee members for approving the contract with the Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce & CVB. He said Ms. Curley worked hard on the development of the proposal and the Lake George Chamber of Commerce & CVB enjoyed the partnership they shared with Warren County and the Tourism Department. He stated it had been a struggle to produce results with the previous contract amount but he anticipated showing marked improvement in Warren County's exposure and in the CVB's attendance at various events.

Mr. Dittrich thanked the Committee members for their time and said this had been the first time he had attended a Tourism Committee Meeting which he found interesting. He commented there were activities that were on opposite ends of the spectrum, such as the website compared to brochures. He stated he had presented as a hotelier at the October 21<sup>st</sup> Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee Meeting and had tried to point out four items which the majority of the hoteliers felt were important. The first of which, he continued, was the possibility of contracting with a consulting company for assistance in taking a look at the "bigger picture" of tourism in Warren County. He said it was important to connect the lodging properties to the retail stores, activities and events. He informed there were companies which could assist Warren County in looking at tourism as a community to evaluate where they stood and what they should be doing. He advised Kathy Flacke Muncil, of the Fort William Henry, had copies of a study completed for Essex County. Ms. Muncil distributed copies of a Leisure Travel Study 2013 Visitor Profile and Return on Investment Conversion Rate Analysis for Essex County, New York to the Committee members; *a copy of same is on file with the minutes.* Mr. Dittrich commented Essex County had completed this report for the last several years and the information could help shape what Warren County should be doing in an effort to increase tourism.

The second item, Mr. Dittrich commented, was the revitalization of the TPCAC (Tourism Promotion Citizens Advisory Committee). He advised that government, tourism agencies, CVB's and tourism professionals should be working collectively to increase tourism. He stated Warren County had a wealth of tourism professionals and these resources should be utilized. He advised the third item pertained to transparency to the process and he commented Committee Meetings, such as this one worked towards that end. He said they should be working together to determine where funds should be expended, what was the best value and if they were receiving the results expected. He stated there was an ROI (return on investment) with everything and it was important to ensure that funds were expended in a way which increased tourism. Lastly, Mr. Dittrich informed, the hoteliers would

like to sit down with Supervisors to determine what they could be doing collectively and he thanked the Supervisors who had met with them after the October 21<sup>st</sup> Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee Meeting.

Mr. Merlino said the Committee members appreciated Mr. Dittrich's comments. He apprised it was nice to see so many representatives of tourism related businesses attend the Tourism Committee Meeting. He expressed that attending the Committee Meeting gave business owners a better perspective of what the Tourism Department accomplished. Mr. Dickinson agreed with Mr. Merlino and noted many of the attendees were from Lake George businesses. He added he would like to see representatives of tourism related businesses attend Meetings on a regular basis. He extended an open invitation for business owners to contact him at any time by calling his cell phone. He expressed that with the changing trends in tourism it was vital for tourism related businesses to stay in touch with the County and he stated their input was invaluable to him.

As there was no further business to come before the Tourism Committee, on motion made by Mr. Conover and seconded by Mr. Dickinson, Mr. Merlino adjourned the meeting at 11:29 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Charlene DiResta, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist